REMARKS

No amendments to the claims are being requested in the present response; and, accordingly, claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-21, 33-34, 37-44 and 46-47 remain pending. All of the claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully request that the claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

Response to Rejection of Claims 1-6, 10-14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 33, 34, 37-39, 41-44, 46 and 47

The above-noted claims stand rejected as being unpatentable over Bohm et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,982,780 ("Bohm") in view of Clanton et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,734,867 ("Clanton"). Applicants acknowledge that Bohm does disclose some of the features of the independent claims, but Bohm does not disclose all of the features of the independent claims. The Examiner acknowledges that the subject-matter of the independent claims are not anticipated by the prior art and accordingly reaches out for combinations of art in the attempt to make a case for obviousness. Still for reasons of clarity and as a base for the discussion of the contested non-obviousness, prior art disclosure of claimed features are discussed briefly herein.

It is respectfully submitted that the summarily treatment of the claimed features that is done in the Office Action is slightly misleading. Applicants discuss the independent claims, as well as the claimed features thereof separately as follows.

As regards claim 1:

* Bohm discloses what is recited in the preamble, i.e. "A method for allocating time slots...recurrent frame of said network".

* Bohm discloses "allocating a set of time slots to a circuit-switched first channel".

* Bohm does not disclose "associating the allocated set of time slots to said first channel with a first level of priority", since Bohm does not disclose any handling of priorities of time slots.

* Bohm does not disclose "receiving a request for time slots for a circuit-switched second channel associated with a second level of priority", since Bohm does not disclose priority handling. However Bohm discloses receiving a request for time slots for a circuit-switched second channel. The request is fulfilled if, and only if, there are free time slots available.

* Bohm (consequently) does not disclose "comparing said first and second levels of priority".

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* Bohm does not disclose "determining whether or not to deallocate a subset of said set of time slots from said first channel, and allocate the deallocated subset of time slots to said second channel, based on said comparison".

* It is questionable whether Clanton discloses all features defined in the preamble of claim 1, but this will not be further discussed herein. As explained below, Clanton does not fill the void of features missing in Bohm.

* Clanton does not disclose "allocating a set of time slots to a circuit-switched first channel". The channel of Clanton that may be comparable with the channel of claim 1 is a one time slot channel, as has been explained in a response to a previous Office Action.

* Consequently, Clanton does not disclose "associating the allocated set of time slots to said first channel with a first level of priority".

* Clanton does not disclose "receiving a request for time slots for a circuit-switched second channel associated with a second level of priority", "comparing said first and second levels of priority", and "determining whether or not to deallocate a subset of said set of time slots from said first channel, and allocate the deallocated subset of time slots to said second channel, based on said comparison", as has been acknowledged in a previous Office Action as well.

Continuing with the obviousness rejection of the last Office Action, claim 1 is referred to again. Generally the obviousness rejection is respectfully traversed. Already the plural features of claim 1 that neither Bohm nor Clanton disclose, and the fact that there are few common points of origination in Bohm and Clanton, since the methods disclosed therein are quite different, implies that it would not have been obvious for one or ordinary skill in the art to combine Bohm and Clanton and additionally manage to add further non-disclosed features so as to arrive at the claimed method.

The problem that is raised in Bohm in order to arrive at the solution according to the present invention, as defined in claim 1, is how to be able to increase the dynamic in the system such that a node does not have to just wait for slots to be free when it has been determined that there are not many enough free slots. Clanton teaches the use of priority levels dedicated to users as a means for solving the issue of letting one or the other user have access to a time slot. It is held as using hindsight to put forward the question in the way that has been done in the Office Action on page 3, last paragraph, i.e. to include "based upon priority", since priorities are not discussed in Bohm. There is nothing in Bohm that indicates

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that the use of priorities among the users is the only way to go to find a solution to this problem.

Furthermore, as has been previously noted, Clanton does not disclose allocation of a set of time slots to a circuit-switched first channel. As is clearly evident from this application the allocation process results in adding time slots to, or in other words reserving time slots for, a channel. When time slots are deallocated they are removed from the channel. This is a basic function of the present system as well as of the system in Bohm. In Clanton a single time slot is used as a channel. The time slot is dedicated to a particular user. Upon request from a user of higher priority the time slot is temporarily taken over by that user, but when it is no longer needed it is returned to the original user, who can then start using it again. Moreover, even the user to which the time slot is dedicated has to check in advance if the time slot is still available before using it, and this is done every time the user has to communicate via the time slot.

This behaviour is clearly described in Clanton in column 2, lines 11-24. It says "Before a subscriber unit may transmit a packet on an uplink channel, the subscriber unit must first select a time slot and contend for channel access on the selected time slot. Upon successfully gaining access to the uplink channel, the subscriber unit begins to transmit segments of a data packet on the selected time slot, checking the channel state of the time slot before each transmission, and suspending transmission whenever the subscriber unit fails to decode the downlink or the channel state indicates that a user with a higher priority has ownership of the time slot. When the channel state indicates that the subscriber has again ownership of the time slot, the subscriber unit continues to transmit on the time slot until the packet ends." Such a method has no or few similarities with the method that Bohm discloses but a large number of dissimilarities. The method of Clanton lacks basic features, as explained above, such as for example allocating sets of time slots to circuit-switched channels; and receiving a request for time slots. It would have been far from likely that one of ordinary skill would have read Clanton at all in order to find solutions to the problem related to the method of Bohm. It would have been far from obvious that one of ordinary skill in the art both would have recognised the priority handling as a possible means for solving the problem related to the method of Bohm, and would have been able to develop the priority handling in accordance with the solution defined by claim 1, that is a solution including also those features, as shown above, which are not disclosed in any one of Bohm and Clanton. In light of this the rejection of claims 1, 21 , and 42 is respectfully traversed.

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The features as claimed in the other independent claims 21 and 42, are related to those of claim 1 to such an extent and in such a respect that neither claims 21 or 42 are obvious in view of Bohm and Clanton.

Furthermore, since claims 2-6, 10-14, 17, 18, 20, 33, 34, 37-39, 41, 43-44, 46 and 47 are dependent on claim 1, or 42, and accordingly are patentable as well for at least the reason of dependency.

Response to Rejection of Claims 7 and 8

Claims 7 and 8 are dependent on claim 1, and consequently they are patentable at least for the reason of dependency.

Response to Rejection of Claims 15, 16, and 40

Claims 15, 16, and 40 are dependent on claim 1, and consequently they are patentable at least for the reason of dependency.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn and the claims allowed. Should any other action be contemplated by the Examiner, it is respectfully requested that he contact the undersigned at (408) 392-9250 to discuss the application.

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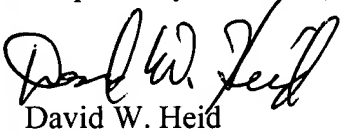
Respectfully submitted,



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